



Informational Notes for First Responders and Officials

Bulletin #53 – June 30, 2004
SEMA's Homepage: sema.dps.mo.gov

Holden Announces 37 Counties to Receive Disaster Assistance

Governor Bob Holden announced Missouri received a Disaster Declaration for Individual Assistance on June 13 for 37 counties impacted by the May storms between the 18th and Memorial Day weekend.

The 37 designated counties are Adair, Andrew, Bates, Benton, Buchanan, Caldwell, Carroll, Cass, Cedar, Chariton, Clay, Clinton, Daviess, DeKalb, Gentry, Grundy, Harrison, Henry, Hickory, Jackson, Johnson, Knox, Linn, Livingston, Macon, Mercer, Monroe, Nodaway, Platte, Polk, Randolph, Ray, Shelby, St. Clair, Sullivan, Vernon and Worth.

Disaster Resource Centers were opened in Harrisonville, Macon, Maysville, Chillicothe and Trenton.

As of Close of business June 29, 2004, 694 residents called the FEMA tele-registration (800-621-FEMA); 237 families had received housing assistance; all shelter and feeding operations were closed (5,585 meals served); and the SBA reported that two business loan applications had been approved and seven applications for home loans had been approved.

Check out the Citizen Corps/Cert Link on the Homepage!

The new Missouri Citizen Corps/CERT website is now available. There is a link on the SEMA homepage.

SEMA Newsletters Posted to Homepage

The Summer 2004 SEMA, Missouri Mitigation, MERC, and MEPA newsletters are posted to SEMA's homepage: sema.dps.mo.gov The documents are in PDF format. They maybe easily viewed or downloaded.

Kansas City Receives \$2.3 Million for Prospect Bridge Mitigation Project

Kansas City received a check for \$2,374,484 under the hazard mitigation program for the Prospect Bridge/Brush Creek Project. SEMA is reimbursing Kansas City for work-completed to-date (50% completion) on the bridge mitigation project. The project will be completed by the end of September.

In 1998, seven (7) people died when their vehicles were swept off the Prospect Bridge by flash flooding along Brush Creek. At that time, Brush Creek made a sweeping "S" curve as it passed under Prospect Avenue. The combination of the curve, and a narrow bridge opening caused the floodwaters to rise to dangerous levels.

To mitigate this situation, the Prospect Bridge project was designed to prevent future flood damages along Brush Creek. To that end, Kansas City and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers decided to straighten and deepen 2,200 feet of the channel and relocate the bridge to a new location south of the existing bridge. The project was approved for \$7,200,000 (of which \$5,400,000 is federal funding and \$1,800,000 is a non-federal match by Kansas City.) SEMA is responsible for the financial management of the federal grant.

ODP, FEMA Announce Firefighter Grants

The DHS's Office of Domestic Preparedness announced five Missouri Fire Departments received grants for Operations and Firefighter Safety. The departments are: Advance Fire Department (\$21,600); Dolan & West Dolan Fire Protection District \$45,360; Hillsboro Fire Protection District \$101,340; Howell County Rural Fire District #1 \$75,802; and Sparta Fire Protection District \$45,166.

The DHS's FEMA announced two Missouri Fire Departments received Fire Prevention and Safety grants for projects focusing on the prevention of fire-related injuries to children. The departments are: International Association of Arson Investigators (Bridgeton) \$304,797; and Lotawana Fire Protection District \$1,553.

Fraud Activities Targeting Disaster Victims

FEMA has become aware of several instances of fraud activity have been directed at Disaster Victims in West Virginia, and possibly other states that may have an active Disaster Response operation underway. Thus far, these activities seem to follow three basic methods or variations of operation:

* A Disaster Victim (DV) receives a telephone call from someone claiming they are from FEMA, who explains that they already have the DV's name, address, bank routing number, and other personal information; but that FEMA needed their checking account number in order to process a government grant. The caller then asks for authorization to withdraw \$295 from the DV's checking account for "processing fees." The caller relates that within ten days after the payment of the "processing fee," the DV will receive a government grant of \$25,000 to use for disaster repairs, emergency transportation, or relocation expenses, which, if used for those purposes, does not need to be paid back to the government. The caller provides a "call-back" number of (800) 551-7099, which is not answered when called, and appears to be either a dead-box call number, or possibly a calling card provider number.

* A DV receives a telephone call using basically the same methodology noted above; with a variation of a mention of a "Disaster Victim's Assistance Guide," which will be mailed to the DV, after authorization for withdrawal of funds from their personal bank accounts for "processing fees." The "Guide" is purported to tell the DV how to file appropriate paperwork for a \$25,000 grant.

* In a "door-to-door" solicitation, someone claiming to be with a group called "Outreach America" tells the DV that they are working with Disaster Victims in the area to get their homes repaired, and to help them register with FEMA for disaster assistance. During the conversation, the visitor attempts to obtain detailed personal information about the DV, including banking data, checking account numbers, and other highly personal information. Note: The name "Outreach America" is also used by a legitimate business entity specializing in international insurance and re-insurance issues, and should not be confused with the activity targeted at the DV's.

The FEMA Office of the Inspector General also encourages anyone with knowledge of fraud, waste, or abuse involving FEMA contracts, programs, or personnel to call the Fraud Hotline at (800) 323-8603, 24-hours per day, seven days a week.

“National Preparedness Month” Set for September

DHS's Tom Ridge sent Governor Bob Holden a letter requesting Missouri participate in “National Preparedness Month” on September 9, 2004. Missouri's Homeland Security Director Tim Daniels plans to meet with state agency staff for Missouri's campaign. The campaign will focus on preparedness for homes, businesses and schools.

At the National level DHS partners are American Red Cross, America Prepared Campaign, National Association of Broadcasters, and the U.S. Dept of Education. Ridge encourages Missouri to partner with first responders, Citizen Corps Councils and Red Cross Chapters on this campaign.